The Divisional Superintendents and independent Gazetted Post Masters have been delegated powers of granting registration of publications, which fulfill the prescribed conditions, as registered newspapers for transmission by post on special rate of postage.

PROCEDURE:

An application for the first registration of a newspaper as registered newspaper for the purpose of transmission by post shall, save in the case of a newspaper printed or published under the orders of any Government in India or for official purposes, be made to Divisional Superintendent of Post Offices or Gazetted Postmasters in the form prescribed for the purpose by the Director General, and will be accompanied by two copies of the latest issues of the newspaper sought to be registered, a list showing the names and addresses of at least fifty *bonafide* subscribers and by a certificate from the District, Presidency or Sub-Divisional Magistrate within whose local jurisdiction the newspaper is printed or published or the printer or the publisher resides stating that the declaration or declarations required by Section 5 of the Press and Registration of Book Act, 1867 has or have been made or no such declaration is required under the said Act as the publication is not a newspaper according to the definition given in that Act.

(II) PERIODICALS

Rule 17-B of the Indian Post Office Rules, 1933, framed under the powers given in the Indian Post Office Act, 1898, provides-that the special rates of postage mentioned in Rule 1 in respect of book packet containing periodicals shall be applicable only if the following conditions are satisfied:-

(a) That it is registered with the Registrar of Newspapers for India under the Press and Registration of Books Act, 1867 (25 of 1867).

(b) That the periodical bears in print in any convenient place either on the first or last page thereof, the superscription "Registered with the Registrar of Newspapers for India under No ..... "

New law against private phone-tapping

1846. SHRI SHAHID SIDDIQUI: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that due to emerging advanced technologies mobile phone tapping and keeping surveillance on them is becoming very easy;

(b) whether it would harm the security and integrity of our country;

(c) the steps Government are taking to keep a watch on such problems; and

(d) whether Government are planning to make some new law to stop this private tapping of phones?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) to (d) Lawful interception is carried under section 5(2) of the Indian Telegraph Act, 1885 in the interests of " ..... the sovereignty and integrity of India, the security of the State,

friendly relations with foreign states or public order or for preventing incitement to the commission of an offence, for reason to be recorded in writing ..... " The Rule 419A of the Indian Telegraph Rules, 1951 framed under Indian Telegraph Act, 1885 lays down elaborate mechanism for lawful interception. As per the conditions of the telecom service licences, the Licensee shall ensure protection of privacy of communication and ensure that unauthorized interception of messages does not take place.

Introduction of VRS in BSNL

1847. SHRI TAPAN KUMAR SEN: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any move to introduce Voluntary Retirement Scheme (VRS) in BSNL;

(b) the total number of employees targeted to be reduced through VRS;

(c) whether the employees and their recognized union has been consulted on the same;

(d) if so, the outcome of the consultation; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) Sir, BSNL Management is considering a Voluntary Retirement Scheme for its non-executive employees. However, no VRS scheme has been approved so far.

(b) No specific numbers have been targeted for VRS. However, for assessing financial implications of the proposed VRS scheme, a tentative number of 20,000 has been taken.

(c) and (d) Representatives of employees Union have been consulted a number of times on VRS in BSNL. However, employees' union representatives are opposed to VRS in BSNL.

(e) Does not arise in view of (c) and (d) above.

Contract and casual workers in BSNL

1848. SHRI TAPAN KUMAR SEN: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) the total number of contract and casual workers engaged in BSNL;

(b) the numbers of those who are deployed in permanent and perennial jobs;

(c) whether these workers are covered by PF, ESI and Minimum Wages Act; and

(d) the steps being taken to regularize the contract workers engaged in permanent/perennial nature of jobs according to the rules of Government?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) Sir, 12830 contract and casual labourers are engaged in BSNL.